



LWV Corvallis

Serving Benton and Linn Counties

January 2005

Funding Oregon: The Ins and Outs of State Finance

Walter Barkan, Moderator

Thursday, January 13, 2004

Two Choices

Daytime 11:30 to 1:00 P.M.

and/or

Evening 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Corvallis/Benton County Library

Legislative Townhall

February 5, Saturday

Morning 9:30 to 11:30 A.M.

Corvallis/Benton County Library

Events Co-sponsored by LWV Corvallis
and
Corvallis/Benton County Library

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: New Year

LWV Corvallis will open the New Year with the LWVOR Study Funding Oregon: the Ins and Outs of State Finance. The 73rd Oregon State Legislative Session starts on January 10, 2005, and the league intends to publicize information on the State Budget process and the Revenue and Expenditures for 2005–07. We will offer a choice between two different times to listen to the presentations about the budget. Both are open to the public as well as members and discussion is welcome.

The old year closed with the grapefruit sale and the program planning meeting. Lois Marie Zaerr submitted her final report on the sale of 370 boxes in Corvallis along with 145 in Newport for the Lincoln County League. The orders and delivery went extremely smoothly this year due to a reliable truck driver and the combined experience of the Warings and Zaerrs. We appreciate the 45 members who helped with the grapefruit sale. The names are listed on page 5 – what awesome assistance and support. We especially appreciated the combined effort of Dick and Doris Waring and Joe and Lois Marie Zaerr. The support of the spouses was a great help to this finance effort for our league.

The LWVOR Program Planning meeting was attended by a small but intense group of league members. The Corvallis league recommended that the Oregon Judicial Branch be adopted for a state study for 2005–07 as a means of updating the state position. The study was proposed and written by Paula Krane, who submitted the proposal to the LWVOR office and other local leagues within the state. A Homeless Youth study was proposed by the Umpqua Valley League, which could also be an update on Children at Risk. The Corvallis League recommended it be an issue for emphasis on the local level rather than a state study.

The topics to be explored for the remainder of the year are Campaign Finance, Affordable Housing in Corvallis, Governmental Response to Ballot Measure 37, Changes to the Oregon Health Plan, and the Benton County Judicial system. Members are needed and welcome to join in the committee meetings. Announcements of meeting times will be sent out by e-mail to members.

Legislative Townhalls will be scheduled the first Saturday morning of the month starting February 5. Senator Frank Morse and Representatives Kelly Wirth, Andy Olson, and Brian Boquist have agreed to participate in the townhalls. The local League will conduct pre-session interviews with these legislators. We are looking forward to the start of the 73rd Legislative Session and to the interaction with our legislators during the session.

–Karen Nibler, President

LWV Corvallis

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Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVOR

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The bulletin is the newsletter of the LWV Corvallis and is produced nine times a year. Members subscribe through their dues. Membership is open to anyone 18 years or older.



Funding Oregon: The Ins and Outs of State Finance

LWVOR has published its new study and sent each of its members a copy of the fact sheet and booklet. You can look for your copy in the Winter 2004 edition of the Oregon Voter or find it on the LWVOR website. Your local league will present the information from the study on January 13 at two different times: lunchtime from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. and evening from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. The meetings are open to the public and more copies of the study booklet will be available.

Walter Barken, current LWVOR Vice–President, will be the presenter and moderator of the discussion. Peggy Lynch, Louise Ferrell and JoAnne Trow contributed to the study, and Walter served as one of the editors for the study. The Corvallis league has invited these and other finance experts who will be asked to come as resource consultants for this program.

The biggest issue in the next Legislative Session will be the State Budget. The Oregon voters defeated the tax increases enacted by the last legislative session, which lead to automatic reductions in state services.

Oregon has both a spending cap of 8% of projected personal income and a revenue cap of 2% above the estimated budget which returns a refund or credit if it is exceeded. What alternatives or proposals have been proposed? LWVOR intends to educate the public in its booklet about the state funding process and the proposals to reform the revenue and/or expenditure process.

Legislative Townhalls

Be informed about legislative actions by attending the Saturday morning Legislative Townhalls. You will have the opportunity to hear directly from your State Senator and Representatives. Each Saturday we will start with a specific question or legislative subject prior to questions from the audience. These morning meetings have been well attended by the public. The townhall is scheduled from 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. and usually run for the full two hours at the Corvallis/Benton County Public Library. February 5 is the first date. Come listen and learn. Ask questions about your concerns.

Put these dates on your calendar:

February 5

March 5

April 2

May 7

June 4

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

The Governor's Budget has been formulated according to forecasted revenue and was published in December. K–12 proponents say that school funding is inadequate and the proposed budget offers little increase. The Oregon Health Plan was cut in the previous session and the number of covered citizens continues to decrease through attrition. The passage of Measure 37 may require the state to have a fund to pay for compensation.

The Oregon State Police coverage was also cut in the last session and the new budget does not ask for additional staff. The prison population is exceeding the capacity of existing prisons and the new budget asks for new prison construction. The Oregon State Hospital has been deteriorating and alternatives are being studied.

Already we have heard that need outstrips revenues. If you start with understanding the budget process, then listen to the legislators during the session, you should be well educated about the State of Oregon Funding.

UPDATE: CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE INTELLIGENCE REFORM LEGISLATION

President Bush signed into law on December 17 the reform of the intelligence community in Senate Bill 2845 the National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004. The bill passed the House and Senate in early December. The 108th Congress had a particularly active "lame duck" session where the intelligence reform legislation was hotly debated in a conference committee, mostly behind closed doors. Senator Gordon Smith voted no, but Senator Ron Wyden and all five Representatives from Oregon voted yes on this legislation.

The League opposed the House version of the legislation, HR 10, because it included provisions that went beyond the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, and raised serious concerns about civil liberties. Members of the League's National Lobby Corps went to the Hill in October, and the Grassroots Lobby Corps sent more than 1500 emails to Congress. And when the House and Senate versions of the legislation went into a conference committee for an attempt at reconciliation, President Kay Maxwell sent a letter to conferees urging them to guard civil liberties while reforming the intelligence community.

Many of the reforms in the bill that emerged and passed follow the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, although some provisions remain that raise concerns about civil liberties. For instance, the creation of an independent civil liberties oversight board was preserved, but it was stripped of the right to subpoena independent of the Justice Department.

LWVC BOOK CLUB

Join us at Ruth Gallagher's for the new year's book discussion, *The 9–11 Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, a 2004 National Book Award nominee for non-fiction, January 10th, 7:30 p.m. Call Ruth at 754–3112 for directions for her home – and to let her know you'll be attending.

To get a head start on reading, check out the upcoming selections:

February: *Henry and Clara*, Thomas Mallon

March: *Dreams from my Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*, Barack Obama

April: *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (The American empire Project, Chalmers Johnson

May: *The Master*, Colin Toibin

(Note the last two books are currently available only in hardback– alternates may be determined).

For more information about the LWVC Book Club, call Corrine Gobel, 745–7736, cgobeli@aol.com.

Check out our website:
www.lwv.corvallis.or.us

Thanks to All the Grapefruit Volunteers

The Mailing Party People

Jan Ames
Charlaine Beschta
Louise Ferrell
Emily Hagen – student
Kate ? – student
Ann Smart

The Off-Loaders

Walter Barkan
Doug Brodie
Charlie Tomlinson
Dick Waring
Doris Waring
Joe Zaerr

The Quality Checkers – who saved us a lot of time!

Kirk Bailey
Marilyn Koenitzer
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